

Remarks/Arguments

The Office Action of June 15, 2007 and the references cited therein have been carefully studied and reviewed and in view of the foregoing Amendment and following representations, reconsideration is respectfully requested.

The Title of the Invention has been amended to be more clearly indicative of the invention to which the claims are drawn.

Claims 1 – 4 have been canceled.

Claim 5 remains withdrawn from consideration.

New claims 6 – 14, drawn to the elected invention, have been added so as to more clearly patentably distinguish the present invention over the references to Parsonneault et al. (USP 5,601,125) and Balteau (USP 3,645,508)¹.

More specifically, new independent claim 6 recites a technique for use in the manufacturing of a fluid-dynamic bearing unit, wherein

(1) oil L is stored in a first chamber 100, whereas the bearing unit 10 is accommodated in a second chamber 106,

(2) the first chamber 100 and the second chamber 106 are evacuated independently until a first vacuum level and a second vacuum level prevail in the first and second chambers, respectively, and

(3) the oil L is supplied from the first chamber into bearing clearance 8 of the bearing unit 10 when the first vacuum level and the second vacuum level have been established in the first and second chambers, respectively.

According to Applicants' invention of claim 6, it is possible to degas the oil L and remove air from the bearing clearance easily in a relatively short amount of time because the first chamber 100 containing the oil L and the second chamber 106 accommodating the bearing unit are evacuated independently of each other.

¹ The presentation of these new claims, which are in proper U.S. form, renders the rejection of claims 1 – 4 under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, moot.

Moreover, this method allows the first chamber 100 and the second chamber 106 to be evacuated by a small vacuum pump with obvious attendant advantages.

In Parsonneault et al., on the other hand, both the oil and the bearing unit (motor cartridge) 70 are accommodated in a single chamber 68 (see Parsonneault et al., Fig. 2 and refer to col. 5, lines 17 and 18). Thus, the pressure of the oil and the pressure of air in the bearing clearance of the bearing unit 70 are reduced at the same time unlike Applicants' claim 6 which calls for the second chamber 106 to be evacuated independently of the first chamber.

In Parsonneault et al., air within the bearing unit 70 expands and exits from the bearing unit 70 when the chamber 68 is evacuated. The exiting air is mixed into the oil through a needle 66. The air is then allowed to bubble out through the oil (see Parsonneault et al., col. 5, lines 29-32, for example). In this arrangement, even if the oil is degassed before it is introduced into the chamber 68 accommodating the bearing unit 70, the degassing is ineffective because the air within the bearing unit 70 is bubbled through the oil before the oil is supplied into the bearing clearance. On the other hand, Applicants' invention of claim 6 can provide an effective degassing by stirring the oil in the first chamber 100 and regulating the relative pressure levels prevailing in the first and second chambers 100, 106 at the time the oil is supplied from the first chamber 100 to the bearing clearance 8 of the bearing unit accommodated in the second chamber 106.

Still further, the method disclosed by Parsonneault et al. also takes a considerable amount of time because the air in the bearing unit 70 has to be forced through the oil. To this end, a relatively large vacuum pump must be used to evacuate the chamber 68 to the extent that the air is removed from the bearing unit 70 through the oil in the chamber 68.

On the other hand, in the method of Applicants' claim 6, the pressure of the oil L and the pressure in the bearing clearance 8 of the bearing unit 10 can be reduced separately from each other because again, the second chamber 106 is evacuated

independently of the first chamber. Therefore, it is possible to carry out the method in a comparatively shorter amount of time.

The reference to Balteau was relied on by the Examiner for the teachings therein associated with a magnetic stirrer. However, such teachings do not overcome the deficiencies in the method of Parsoneault et al. as described above. That is, even assuming, *arguendo*, the one of ordinary skill in the art were somehow prompted to incorporate a stirring step into the method of Parsoneault et al., the resulting method would still not meet claim 6 and the resulting method would still be subject to all of the drawbacks of the Parsoneault et al. method described above.

Accordingly, the references to Parsoneault et al. and Balteau do not render claim 6, as well as new claims 7-14 depending therefrom, obvious under 35 USC 103. Accordingly, early reconsideration and allowance of the claims are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

VOLENTINE & WHITT, PLLC

/Michael Stone/

By: Michael Stone
Reg. No. 32,442

Customer No. 20987
Volentine & Whitt, PLLC
Suite 1260
11951 Freedom Drive
Reston, VA 20190
Tel. (571) 283-0720

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